



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Gov. Gregoire proclaims Aug. 1-7 Washington Farmers Market Week** ***Washington's 150 farmers markets benefit farmers, consumers, tourists***

**OLYMPIA** – The popularity of farmers markets continues to increase with the number of markets doubling in the past decade. Shoppers are visiting Washington's 150 farmers markets not only to enjoy the freshest, locally grown produce, meats, cheeses and specialty food products, but also to experience new fruits and vegetables and gain increased access to a variety of nutritious, healthy foods for their families.

To recognize their growing importance to consumers, farmers and the economy, Gov. Chris Gregoire, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and the Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) are celebrating Farmers Market Week in Washington Aug. 1-7.

"While we all know farmers markets for the fresh products that are offered, we can't forget how important these markets are to our economy," Gregoire said. "They create local jobs, support our growers and small business owners and attract new visitors to our communities."

Statewide, farmers markets belonging to the WSFMA reported \$32 million in sales in 2009. Dozens of other farmers markets also facilitate substantial sales, with dollars going directly to Washington family farmers and the local community.

"Farmers markets are located in more than 30 counties in the Evergreen State and new markets this year have sprouted up in areas such as south Tacoma, Georgetown, north Spokane and Davenport," said Jackie Aitchison, executive director of the WSFMA. "Our markets are reporting an increase in the number of shoppers, translating into increased sales for our vendors."

"The diversity of markets, the variety of foods available, and increasing public interest in visiting farmers markets is also promoting tourism in the state," said Patrice Barrentine, direct marketing coordinator for the WSDA Small Farm & Direct Marketing Program. "Some visitors get a taste of the local culture off the tourist track by visiting local farmers markets."

Washington's markets are attracting national attention. For example, the Columbia City Farmers Market in Seattle's Rainier Valley was featured recently in a CNN travel section story on notable markets across the U.S.

For a directory of farmers market locations and operating hours, visit the WSFMA Web site at [www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com)

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**Note to editors:** Click for a copy of Governor Chris Gregoire's proclamation for Washington State Farmers Market Week at <http://agr.wa.gov/News/2010/FarmersMarketWeekProclamation2010.pdf>